

## **Letter of Nomination Nick Dines Community Service Award**

The Boston Society of Landscape Architects nominates Nicholas T. Dines FASLA for the ASLA Community Service Award. In addition to his notable achievements as a landscape architect, professor and author, Nick has pursued a busy second career as a community volunteer, bringing landscape architecture to people and places that have little knowledge or experience of the profession. The results of his many years of volunteer service have achieved spectacular results: rebuilding the streetscape of his town center, founding a regional greenway, designing and building local parks and instilling a new awareness of landscape architecture in his community.

In the process, Nick has inspired and educated countless other volunteers in the benefits of his profession. He has brought his skills as a teacher to his volunteer work, patiently guiding citizen volunteers through the design and construction process. His ability to motivate and organize others has had a lasting effect on his community and the surrounding region. By involving hundreds of other volunteers in bringing landscape architecture into their community, Nick has transformed public spaces and the public's perception of our profession. He hasn't just built inspiring community landscapes; he has built a community movement dedicated to improving the region's landscape that is much larger and longer lasting than any one person.

The ultimate goal of Nick's volunteer work is create beautiful, well built spaces that bring people together and create a stronger sense of community in nature. As he said in a recent newspaper article about his work, "My long-term goal is to have all of this become part of the town's persona, part of the town's ethos".

Nick's inspiring community projects include:

### **Revitalizing the town center of Williamsburg**

Over a decade ago, state engineers issued a plan for the reconstruction of the state highway that forms the main street of the village of Williamsburg, Nick's home town. Nick didn't like what he saw: a plan to rush traffic at high speeds through town with no parking for local businesses and no easy way for pedestrians to cross the busy road. So Nick developed an alternative proposal. It included a different road layout with traffic calming features, pedestrian crosswalks, a wide shoulder for bicyclists, street trees, shrubs and benches. Nick presented the plan, along with a petition signed by many town residents, to state highway department officials who accepted it. From a high speed state highway, Williamsburg's town center was transformed into a community space where people could come together.

After gaining the support from local officials and key community organizations and leaders, Nick began an energetic fundraising campaign to gather financial support from local residents and businesses. A key participant in this process, the manager of the Williamsburg branch of Florence Savings Bank, observed that Nick does a lot of things behind the scenes to make his volunteer projects a success. As a result, limited public funds were supplemented by generous private donations of money, materials and labor from local stores, contractors, banks and restaurants.

Nick's project didn't just involve planting flowers on Main Street. It was one of the first applications of traffic calming and complete streets in the region, leading to a fundamentally new, more balanced relationship between cars and pedestrians. It has since helped lead to a change in the mentality of the state highway department which has recently embraced complete streets as official policy. The successful Williamsburg project helped make this fundamental policy change possible. Likewise at the town level, local engineering, public works and town leaders and businesses who were initially skeptical of these new concepts have been won over by Nick's powers of persuasion and the success of his built work.

While the project's policy implications are important, it's also important to point out that Nick is often seen planting, watering or weeding his Main Street flower beds in the summertime. He has planted over 800' of the streetscape with shade trees, shrubs and an array of flowering shrubs that bloom from early spring through late fall. Nick's landscape craftsmanship, design skill and construction savvy (he taught construction at UMass and Harvard for over three decades) have brought greenery and blooms to a former asphalt landscape.

### **Mill River Greenway Initiative**

The Mill River flows from the steep, wooded hills of western Massachusetts down to the flat, fertile valley of the Connecticut River in Northampton. True to its name, the Mill River became a vital source of power for dozens of small manufactories during the early industrial revolution making everything from lumber to silk to brass buttons. These small mills and the towns they supported shaped the character and economy of the watershed. Today the mills are gone but the remains of the dams, buildings and power canals still exist, testaments to a bygone age that still shapes the region.

Realizing the need to preserve this cultural and natural heritage, Nick helped found the Mill River Greenway Initiative in 2009. Consisting of representatives from the towns and cities in the watershed, local businesses, environmentalists and community leaders, the Initiative's goal is to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural character of the watershed. In tackling this regional challenge, Nick has used the same approach he has so successfully brought to bear on his volunteer site design projects. He has seen the

problem first, taken the initiative before anyone else has stepped forward, used his powers of persuasion and inspiration and refused to give up when things get frustrating.

As a result, the Greenway Initiative was up and running within six months and has achieved remarkable results in the three short years of its existence. It has attracted a dynamic and highly qualified board and a large brigade of citizen and professional volunteers. It has proposed a number of specific projects in key areas of the watershed including resurrecting a branch of the river in the City of Northampton, building a cantilevered walkway from Haydenville to Williamsburg and creating a trail interpreting the Great Flood of 1874. Thanks to Nick's skills as a publicist, the Greenway Initiative has received widespread press coverage for these efforts as well as testimonials of support from local officials and businesses.

Nick's work on the Greenway Initiative shows the breadth of his skills as a community volunteer ranging from the planting of flower gardens along his Main Street to the stewardship of a 52 square mile watershed linking rural forests to thriving cities. As such, his volunteer work reflects the breadth and depth of the profession of landscape architecture and the remarkable range of project scales and civic purpose achieved by Frederick Law Olmsted.

### **Mill River Trail and Parks**

As part of the Mill River Greenway project, Nick has completed the planning and preliminary design and permitting for a proposed trail and sidewalk lining the Mill River from Williamsburg to Haydenville. He is developing a detailed, site specific schematic design plan for the trail and working with local communities, residents and abutters to create the plans. The site of the trail is often squeezed between Route 9 - a busy state highway - and the banks of the Mill River which are at times lined with a high concrete retaining wall. Nick's experience in landscape construction is proving essential in developing a plan that meets these challenging safety and construction constraints. As usual, he is enlisting widespread support and volunteer participation in this project.

### **Meekins Park**

Nick was the leader of a successful effort to transform a neglected corner of the Mill River Greenway into new park adjacent to the town of Williamsburg's library. The goal of the project was to make the Mill River more visible and accessible to the public, a first step in his vision for a restoration of the river in Williamsburg. In fact, the construction of Meekins park is one of the first accomplishments of the Mill River Watershed Initiative, a watershed-wide effort that Nick helped found whose goal is to make the river more accessible, scenic and cleaner.

Meekins Park is designed to accommodate public access to the Mill River's edge while providing a safe barrier in the form of a restored iron fence. The new space is intended to serve Library functions and other public events. New benches will allow users to sit next to the river and view both upstream and downstream while reading or accessing the Library's wireless Internet connection and perhaps one day, taking a virtual tour of the new Mill River Greenway. The new park may serve as a lunchtime respite, a place for seasonal events (Arts and Crafts shows, Farmer's Market, Fall Festival, etc.), or merely as a place to gaze at the ever-changing qualities of the Mill River as it passes through Williamsburg on its way to Northampton and onto the Connecticut River.

While the project looks simple, which adds to its beauty, the process required to seek permits and work on riparian buffers was complicated. Nick designed and built Meekins Park with the help of numerous local citizen volunteers. Nick also recruited local businesses to donate their time, materials and expertise including contractors, the Williamsburg Highway Department and a local stone quarry, who donated 60' of cap stones and wall stones, as well as patio stones for the sitting terrace. The project was funded in part by Town Meeting appropriation, private donations, and the Friends of the Meekins Library. It took a "Village" for the Park to become a reality.

A stone terrace was constructed to commemorate the site of an old dam (long removed), and provides three benches at two different levels that allow users to look up and down the Mill River while sitting next to the fence. The new lawn area is the location of a new Farmer's Market starting last summer which features local produce and wares.

### **Other Volunteer Work**

Angel Park: Nick designed and built a small park in Williamsburg called Angel Park. This small park near the center of town was established as a memorial and place of reflection and was built with private donations. Nick led a group of volunteers in building the brick walkways, retaining walls, a tool storage shed and the installation of plants. The park is now the site of a summer concert series each year.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center Garden and Courtyard: Nick has begun design work on a contemplative garden in a courtyard of the Franklin Medical Center, a regional hospital in nearby Greenfield. The garden will feature shrubs, groundcovers and a wide variety of flowers as well as seating and a small plaza for the use and enjoyment of patients and visitors to the hospital.

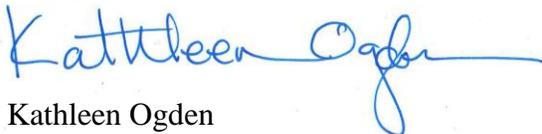
Williamsburg Arts Council: Chairman and Member, Williamsburg Arts Council, Williamsburg, Massachusetts, 1983-1987. Nick's work included organizing the activities of the council, fundraising, recruiting volunteers, organizing special events and promoting landscape architecture as an art form.

Academic: Member, College Personnel Committee, College of Food and Natural Resources, 1992-2003; Editorial Advisor, Science and Technology Group of the McGraw Hill Book Company, 1987-Present; Editorial Board Member and Co-Founder, "New England Landscapes", 1987-Present; Member, Committee on International Research, College of Food and Natural Resources, 1987-1988; Member, Campus Planning Committee, University of Massachusetts, Amherst 1994-2003; Design and Construction of the Waugh Memorial Garden, University of Massachusetts, 1986-1987; Advisor, University Arts Council, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Consultant to U.S. Department of Energy, 1985; Faculty Senator, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1973-1976

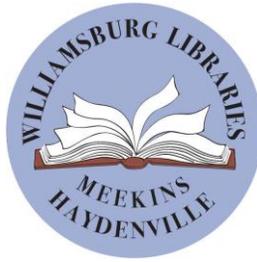
ASLA: Chairman, Open Committee on Energy, 1982-1987; Acting BSLA Program Director, 1990-1991; Chairman, Accreditation Team, 1989-Present

Nick Dine's leadership as a volunteer has transformed physical spaces as well as attitudes in his community and the greater region. He has brought a new awareness of the benefits and potential of landscape architecture to thousands of people through his ability to work with others, solve complex political and physical challenges and design beautiful and well built public landscapes created by volunteers. We heartily recommend Nick for the ASLA Community Service Award.

Sincerely



Kathleen Ogden  
President, Boston Chapter ASLA



Dear ASLA Jury,

Travel through Williamsburg, Massachusetts during the spring, summer or fall and you will certainly notice the profusion of flowers blooming along Route 9 in the center of town. Stop and stroll around town and you may read a book on the library patio, seek a quiet moment in Angel Park, read the names of veterans while relaxing in front of the Veteran's Memorial, or sit next to the Mill River. The concept and creation of these public spaces in Williamsburg are largely the result of the dedication and energy of one person: Nicholas Dines.

We would like to heartily endorse Nick's nomination for the 2013 ASLA Community Service Award. What makes Nick special and worthy of an ASLA Community Service Award is his ability to use his technical knowledge and practical experience to create significant public spaces and beautify large areas of town that are enjoyed by all members of the community. Projects he has completed over the past several decades include:

- Nick designed the grounds surrounding the new addition to the Meekins Library and then led a group of volunteers to construct the plan. Funding for some of the materials was provided by the Town; other materials and time were donated by local businesses and citizens. This major project included a patio, several retaining walls and a set of stairs made of Goshen stone, and the installation of many plantings. Later he led a second group in installing a wrought iron fence on top of the floodwall along the Mill River next to the library. Nick's vision is to make the Mill River more visible and accessible to the public and the fence and sitting terrace were the first section of a planned river park in Williamsburg. Nick continues to maintain the plantings around the library as a public service to the Town, and a new weekly farmers' market is being planned for the lawn overlooking the river this spring and summer.
- Working with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Nick designed the main roadway intersection in Williamsburg. The State's original plan was a barren expanse of asphalt and concrete without any parking for the local businesses or anywhere for people to stop, talk, or do anything else but sprint out of the way of traffic. His design calmed traffic, allowed cars to enter and exit two adjacent businesses and created a public space large enough for several trees and some shrubs. People are able to sit under the shade of the trees and safely navigate the intersection.

- Nick established and planted about 800 feet of flower beds along Route 9 in the central part of Williamsburg. He maintains the flower beds through his own efforts and with the help of volunteers under his direction. Nick obtains money for landscape supplies from local business donations and from proceeds from beverage container deposits donated at the town transfer station.
- He designed, organized materials and labor, and carried out the repair of the Veteran's Memorial. This included masonry work on the memorial, installation of a large terrace in front of the memorial and landscaping the Memorial with flowers, shrubs and trees.
- Nick helped design and build Angel Park. This small park near the school in the center of town was established as a memorial and place of reflection and funded with private donations. Through his enthusiasm and strong belief in what he is doing, Nick led a small group of volunteers in laying the brick walkways, building retaining walls and a tool storage shed, and installing the plants. The park is now the site for a summer concert series each year.

Nick's efforts to beautify the town are contagious. His work has inspired other businesses and private property owners to spruce up their own road front areas with landscaping and flowers. In effect, Nick has "set the standard" for landscape design and that standard is of the highest quality.

What makes Nick so much more than just an indefatigable gardener and beautifier of his surroundings is the fact that he does it all for a larger purpose that he is happy to articulate: he means to transform the civic life of the town for the better by creating settings where people can meet, converse, share activities, relax, bounce ideas around, participate as individuals in maintaining the town's public face, and *feel comfortably at home in our public spaces*. Because he uniquely combines that big vision with a great deal of practical know how, political acumen, physical stamina, patience and discriminating workmanship, he is succeeding brilliantly. We are a richer town, not just a prettier one, because of Nick.

We thank the ASLA for their consideration of Nick Dines for the 2013 Community Service Award.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wenner  
Director Meekins Library



*The River Runs Through Us*

Boston Society of Landscape Architects  
19 Harrison St.  
Framingham, MA 01702

Re: Letter of Support for Nick Dines

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Nick Dines for the ASLA Community Service Award. I have known Nick for many years as a highly skilled teacher and practitioner, but only in the past three have I had the pleasure and honor of working with him as a community collaborator.

In 2009, a dozen local residents, including Nick, decided that the time was ripe to initiate a greenway program for our local Mill River, the main stem of which runs through the towns of Williamsburg and Northampton, Massachusetts. The Mill is a small river, 18 miles long with a 52 square mile watershed, but with an extraordinary industrial history dating back to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. The river marks the central meeting place, and is the most important historical and natural feature of Williamsburg, the town in which Nick lives.

Within six months we had formed the Mill River Greenway Initiative (<http://millrivergreenway.org>). Nick was the principle voice for the town of Williamsburg and became our best conceptual thinker, developing a framework within which we continue to work and a simple explanation of what we do – the “elevator description” of the Initiative. It didn’t take long for me to figure out that Nick was a vital voice in his community, but it wasn’t his status as a teacher or designer, but rather as a doer. His revitalization of the town center around the Meekins Library convinced his fellow residents that he was dedicated to the town with a trusted voice and willing hands.

I particularly remember a bike ride through Williamsburg, crossing the bridge in town, glancing to my right, and there was Nick and his fellow workers, setting rocks into the new wall that shored up the banks of the Mill. A year later, that pretty little park became the site of the Williamsburg farm market, the first open market anyone in town

could remember, now a location where the whole town meets on Thursdays from May to October. We immediately put the project on our website as a sample of what great design can do for the Mill River ([http://millrivergreenway.org/?page\\_id=124](http://millrivergreenway.org/?page_id=124))

Working with a BSLA charrette in spring of 2012, Nick contributed a plan to link two Williamsburg villages together by way of a path that he designed. His ideas helped lead directly to the creation of an official Williamsburg town Mill River Greenway Committee to develop alternatives to create such a path since it's extremely difficult to navigate the only route except by car on a busy state road. Nick, of course, is on that committee, and we eagerly await the results of their work in March 2013.

Whenever I ask local residents about the Mill River in Williamsburg, they inevitably refer me to Nick. He's such a treasure to the town and to our region that we would never have been able to attain any of our success without his help and wise words. What an extraordinary impact he's made, and what great success we've seen from his efforts!

It's an honor and pleasure to recommend him for the ASLA Community Service Award.

Sincerely,

John Sinton  
Co-moderator Mill River Greenway Initiative  
Vice-chair Connecticut River Watershed Council Board of Trustees  
Adjunct Professor of Landscape Architecture, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst



*Town of Williamsburg  
Board of Selectmen*

*141 Main Street, P.O. Box 447  
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ASLA Community Service Award Nominations  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Community Service Award Jury:

The Williamsburg Select Board highly recommends Nick Dines for the 2013 ASLA Community Service Award. Nick has been an outstanding local volunteer for decades, bringing dramatic and positive change to the environment, character and sense of community of our town.

Nick's volunteer work has occurred at a variety of levels, ranging from new roadside plantings, to the creation of community parks to work with the larger watershed of the Mill River which flows through the center of our town. Regardless of the scale of his work, Nick brings tremendous energy, attention to detail, hard work and a unique ability to inspire, organize and lead other volunteers. His knowledge and enthusiasm for his work is infectious and results in the participation of large numbers of people in projects that develop town-wide support. As a result, Nick has changed the attitude of the town toward its public spaces, natural features and community gathering places.

As leaders of the town's government, we have been impressed by Nick's ability to work with local, regional and state officials on a variety of projects. He has worked well with our board and other town boards, consulting with us on his ideas at early stages in the process and responding to our questions and concerns. We have played a central role in approving and supporting his proposals and have seen our ideas and recommendations become part of the final projects.

Nick has also worked closely with large state agencies such as the state highway department who initially proposed creating a wide, high-speed highway through the center of our downtown. Nick's ability to reason with state officials, develop realistic alternative plans and persevere with his proposals eventually convinced the state highway department to alter their road plans. The end result is a friendly, walkable downtown environment with increased parking for local businesses and more room for pedestrians, green space and ornamental plantings.

New parks created at the Meekins Library and at Angel Park have enhanced the character of the village center. Again, Nick organized large numbers of volunteers to help conceive, design and build these new amenities. In the end, the volunteers and the town as a whole adopted these projects as their own, attesting to Nick's skill as a motivator, educator and volunteer.

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Washington, DC 20001-3736  
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Nick has helped our town understand landscape architecture and the beauty, environmental health and strong sense of community the field can bring to communities large and small. Nick's experience and enthusiasm for landscape architecture is infectious and has taught hundreds about how the profession can directly benefit people's lives. His mission has been to improve his town and to create a new awareness of our environment, our history, our community and the existing and potential beauty of our town for generations to come.

For all these reasons, we encourage you to grant Nick the ASLA Community Service Award for 2013.

Sincerely,

Denise L. Banister  
Clerk, Williamsburg Select Board



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To: ASLA Awards Committee

From: Mark Lindhult, FASLA, Professor

Re: Nomination for Nick Dines, FASLA for the 2013 ASLA Community Service Award

I am writing to strongly support the nomination of Professor Emeritus Nick Dines, FASLA for the 2013 ASLA Community Service Award. Nick was a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts for 35 years (1969-2004) and I had the honor and pleasure to share 21 of those years with him as a colleague.

Nick is a true renaissance man – a designer, musician, poet, gardener, stone mason and award winning author (Time Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture, McGraw-Hill, 1997). He is driven by a deep intellectual curiosity that propelled him through his academic career and made him such a thoughtful educator. Generations of students benefited from his insights into the profession. He has always believed that the landscape architect's primary responsibility is to the public and he has been an advocate for public outreach his entire career.

While at UMass Nick ran numerous design studios that provided direct outreach to communities in Massachusetts as well as chairing numerous masters projects that benefited public agencies and non-profit organizations. Nick engaged these public activities with a passion that he infused in his students, many of whom have gone on to be leaders in the profession and in public agencies.

What distinguishes Nick most is the community service that he has continued to perform during his retirement. He strongly believes that people will start to understand landscape architecture when they see it in their own front yard – mainly the public spaces that they engage with every day. For this reason, Nick took on his own local community of Williamsburg, MA as a case study.

When the Massachusetts Department of Transportation highway division decided that downtown Williamsburg needed a new intersection designed for "safety" (code for widening) Nick went to work realizing that the proposal would destroy the historic beauty of the downtown. He designed an alternative to the Mass DOT proposal that achieved their safety objectives, yet created rich planting areas and beds for flowers adjacent to businesses. He worked closely with the business owners and explained to the community how they could enrich their downtown. Nick's design was accepted and constructed. To follow through on his commitment, he also did much of the planting installation and maintenance, some of which has now been taken up by many of the local businesses. However, every spring Nick can be seen in downtown Williamsburg tending to the lush plantings. He planted the seed and it has taken root.

At a larger scale, Nick has taken an active role in the planning for the Mill River Greenway which became the WMass Section of the Boston Society of Landscape Architects LA Month

project in 2012. He is working with other professionals doing pro bono work to help local community leaders understand how to incrementally implement a greenway along this historic and culturally rich river corridor. He has moved this larger scale planning work down to a detail level at the Williamsburg Public Library by designing and constructing an entrance area, walls and outdoor public area adjacent to the Mill River.

Nick embodies the public service role that is central to the profession of landscape architecture. His civic mindedness and commitment to community values make him most deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lindhult', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

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Mark Lindhult, FASLA  
Chair, LARP Personnel Committee